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CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO

THE RECENT POLITICAL SITUATION

IN

SOUTH AFRICA.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

August, 1900.

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INDEX.

No.	Name.	Date.	Page.
	I.—Letters from Sir J. H. de Villiers and Mr. Melius de Villiers.		
1	Sir J. H. de Villiers to President Steyn ...	May 21, 1899	1
2	Sir J. H. de Villiers to Mr. Fischer	July 31, 1899	3
3	Sir J. H. de Villiers to Mr. M. de Villiers ...	July 31, 1899	4
4	Mr. M. de Villiers to Mr. Fischer	August 4, 1899	5
5	Sir J. H. de Villiers to Mr. Fischer... ...	September 28, 1899	5
	II.—Letters from Mr. Merriman.		
6	Mr. Merriman to President Steyn	March 11, 1898	6
7	Ditto	Jan. 1, 1899	7
8	Mr. Merriman to Mr. Fischer	May 26, 1899	8
9	Mr. Merriman to Mr. de Wet	November 14, 1899	9
	III.—Letters from Mr. Te Water.		
10	Mr. Te Water to President Steyn	May 8, 1899	10
11	Ditto	May 17, 1899	10
12	Ditto	May 27, 1899	11
	IV.—Correspondence of Members of the Imperial Parliament.		
13	Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. John Ellis, M.P. (with enclosure).	August 6, 1900	12
14	Mr. John Ellis, M.P., to Mr. Chamberlain...	August 8, 1900	12
15	Mr. Chamberlain to Dr. G. B. Clark, M.P. (with enclosures.)	August 6, 1900	13
16	Dr. G. B. Clark, M.P., to Mr. Chamberlain...	August 9, 1900	15
17	Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. H. Labouchere, M.P. (with enclosures).	August 6, 1900	15
18	Mr. H. Voules to Mr. Chamberlain	August 13, 1900	17
19	Mr. H. Labouchere, M.P., to Mr. Chamberlain	August 18, 1900	17

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CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO

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I.—LETTERS FROM SIR J. H. DE VILLIERS AND MR. MELIUS DE VILLIERS.

No. 1.

SIR J. H. DE VILLIERS to PRESIDENT STEYN.

(Private.)

MY DEAR PRESIDENT, Cape Town, May 21, 1899.

I MUST heartily congratulate you on having succeeded so far as to induce the Governor and President Kruger to arrange for a meeting at Bloemfontein. I do hope that you will also succeed in inducing them to come to an amicable settlement of all questions in dispute. I sometimes despair of peace in South Africa when I see how irritating and unjust the press is on the one side, and how stubborn the Transvaal Government is on the other.

On my recent visit to Pretoria I did not visit the President as I considered it hopeless to think of making any impression on him, but I saw Reitz, Smuts and Schalk Burger, who, I thought, would be amenable to argument, but I fear that either my advice had no effect on them, or else their opinion had no weight with the President.

I urged upon them to advise the President to open the Volksraad with promises of a liberal franchise and drastic reforms.

It would have been so much better if these had come voluntarily from the Government instead of being gradually forced from them. In the former case they would rally the greater number of the malcontents around them, in the latter case no gratitude will be felt to the Republic for any concessions made by it. Besides, there can be no doubt that as the alien population increases, as it undoubtedly will, their demands will increase with their discontent, and ultimately a great deal more will have to be conceded than will now satisfy them. The franchise proposal made by the President seems to be simply ridiculous.

I am quite certain that if in 1881 it had been known to my fellow Commissioners that the President would adopt his retrogressive policy, neither President Brand nor I would ever have induced them to consent to sign the Convention. They would have advised the Secretary of State to let matters revert to the condition in which they were before peace was concluded; in other words, to recommence the war.

I enclose herewith an extract from the English Act of 1870 in regard to naturalization, which I have altered only so as to make it apply to the Transvaal. In England it is the Secretary of State to whom the application must be made. The veto of the President, which would, of course, have to be exercised *bonâ fide*, would prevent any undesirable or disloyal persons from obtaining the franchise. The certificate of naturalization would entitle the holder to the franchise provided he had the requisite qualifications in other respects.

An offer by the Transvaal to accept the English law with all its restrictions could not possibly be refused. If, however, the restrictions be accepted by the Transvaal with an increase to more than five years, they would probably be rejected by the other side ostensibly on the ground of the length of time required, but in reality on the ground of the restrictions.

If the five years' term were offered by the Transvaal, with a retrospective operation, the Uitlanders would be bound to take it, subject to the restrictions. I fear there would always still be a danger of the Volksraad revoking the gift before it has come into operation.

The recent law revoking the franchise given to persons who were actively loyal during the Jameson raid, if the telegraphic reports are correct, is a most ill-advised business. If some people got the franchise in a fraudulent manner, that might be a reason for appointing a Commission to inquire into the matter, but not for revoking the gift from all those who have obtained it. I cannot, however, believe the reports to be correct. I should despair of the country and South Africa if such legislation were still possible in the Transvaal.

I have always been a well-wisher to the Republic, and if I had any influence with the President I would advise him no longer to sit on the boiler to prevent it from bursting. Some safety-valves are required for the activities of the new population. In their irritation they abuse the Government, often unjustly, in the press, and send Petitions to the Queen, but that was only to be expected. Let the Transvaal Legislature give them a liberal franchise and allow them local self-government for their towns and some portion of the discontent will be allayed. The enemies of the Transvaal will not be satisfied; on the contrary, the worst service that can be done to them is the redress of the grievance, but it is the friends of the country who should be considered. These I am sure will be found to be far greater in number than is suspected.

I should like to have said a word about the dynamite monopoly, but I fear I have already exhausted your patience. My sole object in writing is to preserve the peace of South Africa. There are of course many unreasonable demands; but the President's position will be strengthened and at all events his conscience will be clear, in case of war, if he has done everything that can reasonably be expected from him. I feel sure that, having used your influence to bring him and Sir Alfred together, you will also do your best to make your efforts in favour of peace successful. I feel sure also that Sir Alfred is anxious to make his mission a success, but there can be no success unless the arrangement arrived at is a permanent one and not merely to tide over immediate difficulties.

Very sincerely yours,
J. H. DE VILLIERS.

"An alien who has resided in the South African Republic for a term of not less than five years and intends when naturalized to reside in the Republic, may apply to the President for a certificate of naturalization. The applicant shall adduce in support of his application such evidence of his residence and intention to reside in the Republic as the President may require. The President, if satisfied with the evidence adduced, shall take the case of the applicant into consideration, and may, with or without assigning any reason, give or withhold a certificate as he considers most conducive to the public good, and no appeal shall lie from such decision, but such certificate shall not take effect until the applicant has taken the oath of allegiance."

P.S. 22nd May.—I am glad to see that the recent Volksraad Resolution did not go so far as was first reported.

No. 2.

Sir J. H. de VILLIERS to Mr. FISCHER.

Legislative Council, Cape Town,
July 31, 1899.

Dear Mr. Fischer,

Is there nothing to be done to bring this Transvaal business to a speedy settlement? With the position which I occupy I can offer no assistance and must content myself with making a few suggestions here and there in the hope that they may bear some fruit. Hitherto my suggestions to President Kruger's friends in the Transvaal have certainly not been of much avail. I am convinced they must now regret they did not recommend to President Kruger three months ago, as I strongly urged, to offer voluntarily a liberal Franchise Bill with such safeguards as would prevent the old burghers from being swamped.

A measure which would then have been accepted with gratitude would now be scouted, and the longer the delay the greater the demands will be. If more concessions are ultimately to be made, would it not be the best policy to do so at once with the best grace possible?

Mr. Chamberlain's speech was more moderate than I expected it would be, and as he holds out an olive branch in the form of a joint enquiry into the franchise proposals, would it not be well to meet him in this matter? I know that it might be regarded as a *partial* surrender of independence, but would that not be better than a possible *total* loss of independence? The British public is determined to see the matter through, and, if a contest is begun, will not rest until the Transvaal has completely submitted. Of course, I am only giving you my individual views in strict confidence. I may be mistaken in taking such a serious view of the situation, and perhaps you may have information which satisfies you that there are other ways of settling the difficulty. I confess that I dread the prospect of a war of races in South Africa. If you can see your way to bring about a settlement satisfactory to all concerned you will be a benefactor to South Africa. I don't think that President Kruger and his friends realise the gravity of the situation. Even now the State Secretary is doing things which would be almost farcical if the times were not so serious.

Some time ago I begged of him to drop the censorship of telegrams because it serves no useful purpose and only delays the publication of lies by a few days. His answer was that the Government should not disseminate lies by its own wires. He might as well have said Government should not disseminate lies by its own post-office. To crown all, I see that he has now gone so far as to stop a private telegram (which had been paid for) because it contained a lie. I really don't know where he is going to stop or whether he intends to guarantee that all telegrams allowed to pass contain the truth and nothing but the truth. Could you not induce him to stop such childish nonsense? The Transvaal will soon not have a single friend left among the cultivated classes.

Then there is the Franchise Bill, which is so obscure that the State Attorney had to issue an explanatory Memorandum to remove the obscurities. But surely a law should be clear enough to speak for itself, and no Government or Court of Law will be bound by the State Attorney's explanations. I do not know what those explanations are, but the very fact that they are required condemns the Bill. That Bill certainly does not seem quite to carry out the promises made to you, Mr. Hofmeyr and Mr. Herholdt.

The time really has come when the friends of the Transvaal must induce President Kruger to become perfectly frank and take the new-comers into his confidence. It may be a bitter pill to have to swallow in yielding to further demands, but it is quite clear to the world that he would not have done as much as he has done if pressure had not been applied. What one fears is that he will do things in such a way as to take away all grace from his concessions. Try to induce him to meet Mr. Chamberlain in a friendly manner, and at once remove all the causes of unrest which have disturbed this unhappy country for so many years.

As one who signed the Convention in 1881 I can assure you that my fellow Commissioners would not have signed it if they had not been led to believe that President Kruger's policy towards the Uitlanders would have been very different from what it has been.

In great haste, yours very sincerely,

J. H. de VILLIERS.

No. 3.

SIR J. H. DE VILLIERS TO MR. MELIUS DE VILLIERS.

Wynberg House, Wynberg,
July 31, 1899.

MY DEAR MELIUS,

I HAVE just received your letter of the 28th instant.

At the present time I think it is better for the Cape Ministry not to move any resolution in regard to the Transvaal question.

Besides, while negotiations are pending between the British and Transvaal Governments, it is not advisable to have heated discussions in the two Houses of Parliament. When I was in the Transvaal three months ago, I found that Reitz and others had the most extraordinary notions of the powers and duties of a Cape Ministry in case of war. They are Ministers of the Crown, and it will be their duty to afford every possible assistance to the British Government. Under normal conditions a responsible Ministry is perfectly independent in matters of internal concern, but in case of war they are bound to place all the resources of the Colony at the disposal of the British Crown ; at least, if they did not do so, they would be liable to dismissal.

The debate which took place in the House of Commons since I last wrote to you satisfies me that the British nation is now determined to settle the Transvaal business in a manner satisfactory to themselves.

From an intimate acquaintance with what was going on, I foresaw three months ago that if President Kruger did not voluntarily yield he would be made to do so, or else be prepared to meet the whole power of England.

I accordingly begged of Kruger's friends to put the matter to him in this way: On the one side there is war with England—on the other side there are concessions which will avoid war or occupation of the country. Now decide at once how far you will ultimately go ; adopt the English five years' franchise—offer it voluntarily to the Uitlanders—make them your friends, be a far-sighted statesman, and you will have a majority of the Uitlanders with you when they become Burghers. The answer I got was : We have done too much already and cannot do more. Yet afterwards they did a great deal more. The same policy of doing nothing except under pressure is still being pursued. The longer the delay the more they will have to yield.

I see that Mr. Chamberlain again holds out an olive branch by proposing a joint inqury into the Franchise Bill. If the President is wise, he will even now at the eleventh hour show a conciliatory spirit, and, if he cannot prevent a partial loss of independence, he will at all events prevent a total loss. If he appoints irreconcileables on the Commission, and does the whole thing in a haggling spirit, no good will come out of the inquiry. I have never been able to understand why Kruger never attempted to take the Uitlanders into his confidence. He has always kept them at arm's length with the result that he has entirely alienated them. It is said that there are 21,000 Uitlanders in Johannesburg who support him, and yet no meeting has been held at Johannesburg to compare with the meetings held by his opponents.

What I fear is that Kruger may object to the Uitlanders being in any way represented at the joint inquiry, if one should take place, and yet it is impossible to see how a satisfactory settlement can be made without their concurrence. Why should he not appoint as one of his nominees an Uitlander of position, whose integrity and judgment he has confidence in ? If none such exists, it would only be a proof of his want of tact and statesmanship in not rallying such people to his side. You must pardon these random thoughts. I am so busy as not even to have time to read what I have written. I wrote to Mr. Fischer to-day in somewhat the same strain as I have written to you in.

The Pretoria people do not seem to realize the position. When I was there Reitz seemed to treat the whole matter as a big joke. Judging by his conduct in suppressing private telegrams (paid for) because they contained lies, he must be still treating the matter as a joke. Other incidents show that he is a danger in the present situation.

With love from us all to Adelaide and yourself, yours affectionately,

J. H. DE VILLIERS.

No. 4.

Mr. MELIUS de VILLIERS to Mr. FISCHER.

My dear Mr. Fischer, Bloemfontein Club, August 4, 1899.

I enclose a letter from my brother which I thought perhaps you may care to peruse.

Please to tear it up after perusal. Don't trouble, please, to answer this.

I trust some mode of compromise may be arrived at. Would it not be possible before replying to see Milner personally as to what it really means, as such varying accounts appear in the papers as to its purpose and purport? It has struck me that possibly the Franchise Law passed by the Volksraad is not fully known to the English papers and public, although possible [*sic*] known to the British and other Governments, and, if so, it should be made known by copies being sent to the different papers.

One newspaper has a cablegram that even if the South African Republic does not agree to a Commission, England will appoint one herself. If she does so, that will at any rate give us further breathing time.

Yours sincerely,
MELIUS de VILLIERS.

P.S.—I forgot to add to my note that I rather regretted making you any suggestions (perhaps not well-considered ones) the other morning.

It will be far better, I now think, to consider Chamberlain's proposals as an "olive branch" held out to the South African Republic and to treat it as such, accepting it as far as possible. If this be at the expense of some dignity, remember and please impress upon Oom Paul what I think is an important fact, namely, that the present Ministry in England will not always last.

By giving way now, we do not do so in perpetuity; but I feel assured a Liberal Ministry will be willing to reconsider the relations of the South African Republic to England, and even to revoke the Convention of London. From what I have seen in the "Star" on the subject, I think even the Uitlanders will consent to this.

Better temporary loss of dignity and the preservation of the independence of the country, than war and the entire loss of its independence.

In haste,
M. de V.

No. 5.

Sir J. H. de VILLIERS to Mr. FISCHER.

My dear Mr. Fischer, Cape Town, September 28, 1899.

Before it is too late, I venture to make a final appeal to you. and, through you, to others in the Orange Free State who have any influence with President Kruger and his Raad.

I do not, of course, know what the contents of the next British despatch will be, but if they be such as can be accepted without actual dishonour, I hope they will be accepted. The South African Republic cannot go to war if your Government should consider the despatch one which ought not to be rejected.

Supposing a war does take place, is there any chance of the Transvaal obtaining better terms when the war is over? That question should be most seriously considered by all friends of the South African Republic. The whole might of Great Britain will be brought into play, and the war will not cease until the Transvaal is entirely subjugated. What will the position of the Republics then be?

Judging from the forecasts given of the intended despatch, it will, at all events, formulate all the British demands. If that be so, there will not be the danger of further demands being sprung upon the South African Republic. It will surely be for the interest of South Africa that a full and final settlement should now be arrived at.

What I feel in the matter is that, however badly the Transvaal may have been treated from a diplomatic point of view, there is at bottom good ground for the irritation against its Government.

Throughout the negotiations they have always been wriggling to prevent a clear and precise decision, and have subsequently regretted that they did not accept proposals after they were withdrawn.

The very best friends of the Transvaal feel that the Bill providing for the seven years' franchise is not a fair or workable measure. It is this manœuvring to escape an unpleasant decision which has more than anything else driven the British Government into its present attitude.

My fear is that the fresh proposals will be summarily rejected, but that the day will come when everybody who has had any hand in such rejection will bitterly regret his action. I am assuming, of course, that the proposals are such as can be accepted without dishonour.

The manner in which the latest proposals were rejected does not give one much ground for hope. Take such a reasonable proposal as that members should be allowed to address the Volksraad in the English language. Surely it ought not to have been rejected in such a summary, I might almost say contemptuous, manner.

I confess I look with horror on a war to be fought by Afrikanders to bolster up President Kruger's régime. I could understand a war in defence of the South African Republic after it has made reasonable concessions to the demands of the new-comers, and after it has displayed the same desire to secure good government as is seen in the Orange Free State ; but of such a desire I have not seen the faintest trace.

I am afraid that neither Reitz nor Smuts is the man for the present crisis. I have carefully read the latest correspondence, and I am by no means satisfied that the British Resident was guilty of a breach of faith. The utmost I would say is that there was a misunderstanding. The despatch of the 21st August seems to me to have been wholly unnecessary, unless something happened between the 19th and 21st which led the Transvaal Government to think they had yielded too much. I have heard it said that between those dates a cablegram from Dr. Leyds gave hopes of European intervention, and the return of Wolmarans from the Orange Free State gave hope of assistance from that quarter ; but that may be mere rumour.

You will excuse my troubling you with this incoherent and hastily-written letter. It is only my anxious desire to preserve the peace of South Africa and save the Republics from destruction that has induced me to write it.

Believe me, &c.,
J. H. DE VILLIERS.

II.—LETTERS FROM MR. MERRIMAN.

No. 6.

MR. MERRIMAN to PRESIDENT STEYN.

(Private.)

DEAR PRESIDENT STEYN, Stellenbosch, March 11, 1898.

I FULLY understand your motive in speaking, and also the distinction you draw between "capitalism" and "capital." We are engaged in a life or death struggle with the former in the Colony, where our elections are being "run" with an expenditure of capital that swamps and debauches the expression of honest political feeling.

You will, no doubt, have seen both Sir Alfred Milner's speech at Graaf Reinet and the reported interview with Mr. Rhodes in the "Cape Times." Through both there runs the note of thinly-veiled hostility to the Transvaal and the uneasy menace of trouble ahead. What, I wonder, would be said if the Ruler of either of the two Republics went out of his way to comment on the "retrogressive" character of some Cape legislation—*e.g.*, the free provision of liquor to natives, or if they enlarged on the menace to European occupation in such a State as Basutoland ?

Yet one cannot conceal the fact that the greatest danger to the future lies in the attitude of President Kruger and his vain hope of building up a State on a foundation of a narrow unenlightened minority, and his obstinate rejection of all prospect of using the materials which lie ready to his hand to establish a true Republic on a broad liberal basis. The report of recent discussions in the Volksraad on his finances and their mismanagement

fill one with apprehension. Such a state of affairs cannot last, it must break down from inherent rottenness, and it will be well if the fall does not sweep away the freedom of all of us.

I write in no hostility to Republics: my own feelings are all in the opposite direction; but the foes of that form of government are too often those of their own household. I am quite sure that you have done what you can in modifying the attitude at Pretoria; but I entreat you, for the welfare of South Africa, to persevere, however unsatisfactory it may be to see your advice flouted and your motives so cruelly misrepresented by a section of colonists.

Humanly speaking, the advice and good will of the Free State is the only thing that stands between the South African Republic and a catastrophe.

I do not attach so much importance to the Kotzé incident. It has very little sympathy outside the Jingo press; but the radical fault is the utter incapacity of the body that affects to issue its mandates to the Courts. In England it is a Parliament, but then it represents the intelligence of the country, and in Switzerland the same; in the Transvaal it is a narrow oligarchy.

Believe me, yours truly,
JOHN X. MERRIMAN.

No. 7.

MR. MERRIMAN TO PRESIDENT STEYN.

(Private and Confidential.)

MY DEAR PRESIDENT STEYN, Treasury, Cape Town, January 1, 1899.

LET me begin by wishing you and your State a happy and prosperous New Year.

For us here in the Colony the past year has been a very checkered one. We have had all kinds of material calamities—drought, locusts, plague, and depression. On the other hand, we have gained a point in our conflict with capital, which is, I think, of good augury for the future.

It has been much that the South African party has, with one exception, stood out against the attempts to bribe them. They have shown moderation and dignity, and their opponents have been remarkable for the opposite qualities. All this is good, but we have to do with a most unscrupulous band of adventurers, who cloak their designs under all sorts of high-sounding names that deceive the crowd, and they will not give up the struggle without another effort.

I had the opportunity the other day of a long talk, or rather several talks, with Lippert about the Transvaal. He takes a very sane view of matters there, and is very hopeless. He represents Kruger—as others describe him—as more dogged and bigoted than ever, and surrounded by a crew of self-seekers who prevent him from seeing straight. He has no one to whom he turns for advice, and is so inflated as to have the crazy belief that he (Kruger) is born to bring about peace between Germany and France! If he falls, or dies, who have we to look to? All this plays the game of Rhodes and his brother capitalists.

Is there no opportunity of bringing about a *rapprochement* between us, in which the Free State might play the part of honest broker? We, *i.e.*, the Colony and Free State, have common material interests in our railway, apart from our anxiety to see the common welfare of South Africa increase from the removal of the one great cause of unrest and the pretext for outside interference.

I am given to understand that a South African Appeal Court is one point at any rate upon which the old man is at one with us, and that he might even listen to a rediscussion of the Customs Union proposal, though the latter seems almost too good to be true.

The deplorable confusion and maladministration of his financial arrangements still continue, and are a standing menace to the peace of South Africa. Yet, judging from the utterances of the leading men from the Rand who come down here, a very moderate reform would satisfy all except those who do not want to be satisfied, and, I believe, there is very little sympathy for the mischievous agitation that, rightly or wrongly, is attributed to the designs of Rhodes and Beit.

I am glad to see that you have got your Agricultural Board in working order. I hope it may turn out a real success.

Believe me, yours sincerely,
JOHN X. MERRIMAN.

His Honour President Steyn,
Bloemfontein.

P.S.—We are now living at Schoongezicht, and shall be very glad to see you there.
J. X. M.

No. 8.

MR. MERRIMAN to MR. FISCHER.

(Confidential.)

MY DEAR FISCHER, Cape Town, May 26, 1899.

YOU will, I am quite sure, not take it amiss if I write to you on the subject that must be occupying much of your attention.

It will be a deplorable thing after all the trouble you have taken to bring about a meeting between the High Commissioner and President if nothing comes of it—in such an event if the best happens it would mean a continuance of this deplorable unrest and agitation that works so much mischief in South Africa, but there is, of course, an even worse prospect, namely, that misrepresentation may goad Great Britain into a position where, *with the concurrence and invitation of the other Powers*, she might feel obliged even at the risk of enormous military outlay, to cut the Gordian knot. You will probably say, as I certainly say, "where is the *casus belli*," and refuse to believe it possible to imagine such a contingency. Unfortunately, you and I, who keep our heads, must not ignore the fact that an immense number of people seem to have lost theirs and are ready, without reflection or examination, to accept the highly coloured statements of a partisan press.

I must also add that the Government of the Transvaal has done nothing officially to refute the many false statements. They do not even seem to care to do so. Some months ago I wrote asking Smuts to furnish me with a return showing the amount of money spent by the Government on Johannesburg to enable me to answer the frequent allegations made that the Uitlander's taxes are taken and spent elsewhere. Yet for some reason, though reminded, he has never done so. I merely give this as an instance how the Transvaal people seem to be indifferent to the opinion of the outside world, and how they allow the case against them to go by default. A small matter you may say, but, I think, a very important one, when one considers how opinion is manufactured all over the world.

I believe that if an honest attempt were made to put the true state of affairs before the public, and to explain the many difficulties that beset the Government, people would take a fairer view. Of course I know from previous correspondence that you and the President are not disposed to minimize the blots on the administration of the South African Republic, the weak points in the Constitution and the ignorance and laxity that prevails in financial matters. To do so would be to fatally complicate the situation.

I am sure that you will, and I most strongly urge you to use your utmost influence to bear on President Kruger to concede some colourable measure of reform, not so much in the interests of outsiders as in those of his own State.

Granted that he does nothing. What is the future? His Boers, the backbone of the country, are perishing off the land; hundreds have become impoverished loafers, landless hangers-on of the town population. In his own interests he should recruit his Republic with new blood—and the sands are running out. I say this irrespective of agitation about Uitlanders. The fabric will go to pieces of its own accord unless something is done.

Upon this point *every one* who wishes well to the Republican cause is agreed. I think also that every one of this kind who is a well-wisher fully acknowledges the enormous difficulties of the position arising out of the peculiar population, and would be

anxious to do anything, however small, to assist in a solution. Surely it would be better to come forward now and earn the gratitude of South Africa by a comprehensive and liberal measure than to have the State torn and distracted by constant irritation and bad blood. A moderate franchise reform and municipal privileges would go far to satisfy any reasonable people, while a maintenance of the oath ought to be a sufficient safeguard against the swamping of the old population.

President Kruger should reflect that nine out of ten people that receive the franchise will be supporters of the Republic in which they will have an interest, and that he will, by granting liberal reforms, disarm all the opposition that must be as distasteful to him as it is to his friends, just because they cannot help feeling that there is some real ground behind the artificial agitation that is so sedulously provoked.

The only effect of a dogged refusal will be to set both Chamberlain and Rhodes on their legs again as far as regards South African affairs; which would be a calamity. I am sorry that you could not induce our friend Hofmeyr to come up, as I feel that his presence would have done much good. But we have every confidence in you and in President Steyn.

Try and persuade President Kruger to confer a benefit on the whole of South Africa by granting a broad measure of reform, and you will have done the best day's work any statesman ever did in South Africa.

I wish we could do more to help you.

With kind regards, believe me, yours very truly,

JOHN X. MERRIMAN.

No. 9.

MR. MERRIMAN to MR. DE WET.

MY DEAR DE WET, Treasury, Cape Town, November 14, 1899.

I HAVE not written to you because I am not sure that you will be in town, but I have from time to time communicated with our friend Smit as to the state of affairs. I am sure you are doing your best to keep things quiet, however strong the feelings, the natural feelings of people may be. You must mistrust all the telegraphic news from *both sides* that appear in the papers. My own opinion is, after trying to find out the truth, that, though the Boers have had some success and forced the British back in Natal, it does not come to much, and that they recognize their case to be hopeless as far as getting hold of Natal, and that with the reinforcements coming they will be pushed back on the western border. Beyond overrunning defenceless country, they have not accomplished anything, and the very large force that will advance will be irresistible. They have fought gallantly and made their foes respect them; but it is hopeless. For our people to rise would be sheer madness, and only lead to the loss of our liberties, whereas by sitting still we may exercise some influence over the settlement.

It is a sad time and we have to swallow a great deal, but I am sure that patience is the only course that offers even a hope of peace in the future.

I hope you have seen our friends, for whom I feel more deeply than I can tell you. I am sending you an English paper containing a full report of the debate. If the Republics had not made the fatal mistake of sending the ultimatum when they did, things would have gone differently; but it is of no use going back on what might have been.

Piet du Toit is doing his best across the river, but I am afraid he has a most up-hill task. It is a great blunder the Orange Free State coming across; it does them no good and complicates the position greatly.

With kind regards to yourself and wife, and the Marais,

Believe me, &c.,

JOHN X. MERRIMAN.

III.—LETTERS FROM MR. TE WATER.

No. 10.

MR. TE WATER to PRESIDENT STEYN.

(Translation.)

(Private and Confidential.)

Colonial Secretary's Office, Cape Town,
May 8, 1899.

AMICE,

I HAVE just telegraphed to you.

When you receive this, I hope heartily that the proposition made to you by Schreiner in his letter to you may have been accepted or that something has been done which will achieve the same purpose. Matters appear to all our friends to be very serious. I am one of those who think that much of the noise is bounce, and if any one but Chamberlain was at the helm, I would, perhaps, still believe that they wished to try, by means of threats, to work matters in the Transvaal in the interest of the Uitlanders. But with him I fear it is otherwise. Be that as it may, I consider that nothing but good can come from the proposed Conference between the interested parties. In your position you as go-between can do endless good towards arriving at an understanding at such Conference. I know well that there is a party who will do everything possible to prevent this. Even Sivewright I fear, with his premature propositions, wishes to close this door to us, knowing well that any proposal coming from him would be by Afrikanders considered as good as rejected by the Afrikanders. But all this makes it the more necessary to keep cool and to do what is right, irrespective of everything else.

Circumstances appear to me now to be such that our friends in Pretoria must be yielding; with their friends at the head of the Government here, they have a better chance that reasonable propositions made by them will be accepted than they would have had if we had been unsuccessful at the late elections and our enemies were advisers.

Schreiner, who knows more than any one of us, feels strongly that things are extremely critical.

Telegrams from people in London, whom he thoroughly trusts, such as J. H.'s best friends, received by him on Saturday and this morning, strengthen him in his opinion. We must now play to win time. Governments are not perpetual, and I pray that the present team, so unjustly disposed towards us, may receive their reward before long. Their successors, I am certain, will follow a less hateful policy towards us. When we hear that you have succeeded in Pretoria, then we must bring influence to bear here. Nothing will give me greater pleasure than if you completely succeed in regulating matters on such a basis that peace will now be preserved and that the constant friction will be terminated.

Now, Amice, time forbids me writing more. But only one suggestion—have you no private telegraphic code of which you can send me a copy? the absence thereof was badly felt on Saturday, when Schreiner was compelled to write instead of telegraphing, and there is so little time to lose.

Best greetings.

t.t.
T. TE WATER.

No. 11.

MR. TE WATER to PRESIDENT STEYN.

(Translation.)

(Private and Confidential.)

Colonial Secretary's Office, Cape Town,
May 17, 1899.

AMICE,

YOURS received.

I wish I could agree with you that all the noise about war is bluff. I fear that there is something earnest in it, how reckless soever, and however terrible the consequences by which it may be accompanied.

Also, I doubt if so much good will come from the meeting as some of our bes friends expect; but there is a chance, and in any case no harm can come out of it if you stand between.

Two hard stones will grind with difficulty! I expect much from you personally.

But now I should like a few words of explanation as to what you mean by saying that "the Cape Ministry will be able to do much more good?" In what respect do you think that we can be of more use than before? I would very much like to know your views, and if we are not already working in that direction I will try, as far as possible to do what I can to give effect to your wishes which may be for the welfare of all. Please let me hear immediately and fully about this.

In other respects, I agree entirely with your remarks.

There is one thing that you must not forget—that things here go awkwardly. Even our information is at times not what it ought to be, and for that, perhaps, my Bloemfontein friends are also a little to blame.

What I repeat is that the opportunity has now arisen to grant what can be reasonably asked. If people become unreasonable, then we have the sympathy of the world on our side; but if reasonable things are refused, then our position becomes very difficult. Well, there is now a brilliant opportunity for you to render to South Africa such services as will never fade from memory.

I saw Wessels for half-an-hour yesterday; he leaves this afternoon. "If there is a possibility of war, I shall return"—so he told me. His communications were very interesting and important.

I am very curious to hear what is at the back of these latest endeavours to disturb the peace at Johannesburg. I see by the cables that Rhodes says he knows nothing about it. But then he knew nothing about the Jameson raid.

I have just telegraphed to you, after having consulted Hofmeyr and Schreiner, with reference to the necessity of both parties being informed of the conditions on which the other agrees to attend the Conference. It must be clearly understood, so that no wrong deductions can be made.

Best greetings and all success.

t.t.
T. TE WATER.

No. 12.

MR. TE WATER to PRESIDENT STEYN.

(Translation.)

(Private and Confidential.)

Colonial Secretary's Office, Cape Town,
May 27, 1899.

DEAR STEYN,

YOURS received on my return this morning from Aberdeen. Telegram also reached me. I keep all your communications strictly private; naturally you do not exclude my colleagues and our friend Hofmeyr. I have often read extracts to them, but do not be afraid; I shall not give you away.

To-day, by post, I send you personally our private telegraphic code for use. I borrowed one from Sauer; we have only three, and I must therefore ask you to let us have it back in the course of a couple of weeks. Please keep it under lock and use it yourself *only*. It is quite possible that you will have to communicate with us, and the telegraph service is not entirely to be trusted. I am afraid that things leak out there in one way or another.

I shall not answer your letter now. I heartily hope that your intermediation at such a critical moment will bear glorious fruit. Do your best. It is honestly now the time to yield a little, however one may later again tighten the rope. Keep us duly informed of the course of affairs. I sincerely regret that neither Schreiner nor Hofmeyr can go, but although I have not been able to speak to Schreiner fully about this since my return, I am afraid it is now out of the question.

Everything will come right notwithstanding.
All success to your labours, amice.
Best wishes from us all to you and also to your guests from over the Vaal.

t.t.
T. TE WATER.

P.S.—I have just seen the A.D.C., Belgrave. He would very much like to have a chance to shoot a couple of springbucks, with our friend Papenfus. But be careful how they shoot.

T. TE W.

IV.—CORRESPONDENCE OF MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

No. 13.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN to MR. JOHN ELLIS, M.P.

SIR, Downing Street, August 6, 1900.

I BEG to call your attention to the enclosed copy of a letter containing what purports to be an extract from a letter written by you, and to enquire if you desire to offer any explanations or observations with regard to it.

I am, &c.,
J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure in No. 13.

COPY of a LETTER from Mrs. SOLLY to the Rev. D. Ross, Ladygrey, Aliwal North.

DEAR SIR, Villa Flora, Newlands, June 5, 1900.

THOUGH personally a stranger to you, I venture to write on a matter in which we are both interested.

Mr. Ellis, one of the Members of Parliament, who is anxious to help the South African cause, writes me as follows :—

"We want a stream of *facts* concerning suppression of telegrams, opening of letters, arbitrary arrests, unfair trial, unjustifiable prison treatment, interference with free speech at meetings, but much information sent lacks the element of fullness, detail, and accuracy, which are vital for Parliamentary purposes. The names of informants will be treated as confidential."

I have seen passages in the "South African News" in which your name appears, which leads me to believe you can give *first hand* information on several of these points, and feel sure I need not urge you to do so.

Will you send me a line to say you have received this letter ?

The address of the Member of Parliament I refer to is John E. Ellis, Esq., M.P., 40, Pont Street, S.W., or House of Commons, Westminster.

Yours sincerely,
MRS. JULIA F. SOLLY.

No. 14.

MR. JOHN ELLIS, M.P., to MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

SIR, Wrea Head, Scalby, R.S.O., Yorks, August 8, 1900.

YOUR letter dated 6th inst. (with its enclosure) has reached me here to-day.

The extract to which my attention is drawn appears to speak for itself. It occurred

(I think, for I did not keep a copy) in a private letter written by me in response to communications with respect to censorship and martial law in South Africa and requests to bring certain alleged incidents before Parliament. I pointed out to the sender that the statements lacked precision, etc., and so far as I recollect summed up the matter in the extract forwarded in your letter.

I am, &c.,
JOHN E. ELLIS.

No. 15.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN to DR. G. B. CLARK, M.P.

SIR, Downing Street, August 6, 1900.

I beg to call your attention to the enclosed copies of letters purporting to have been written by you and to enquire if you desire to offer any explanations or observations with regard to them.

I am, &c.,
J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 15.

Dr. G. B. CLARK, M.P. to President KRUGER.

TRANSVAAL COMMITTEE.

St. Ermin's Mansions, Westminster,
MY DEAR PRESIDENT KRUGER, London, S.W., September 29, 1899.

I HAVE had a long interview with Mr. Chamberlain, and have discussed with him some of the questions at issue between the two Governments, as I hoped to secure from him a proposal that if you granted the five years' franchise he would accept the Judicial Tribunal to determine all the other questions at issue between the two Governments. I asked him if he would agree to the four Chief Justices of South Africa forming the tribunal, with the Lord Chief Justice of England as umpire in the case of the others not being able to agree. This proposal Mr. Chamberlain absolutely refused to accept as he said that three out of the four Chief Justices in South Africa would be on your side and that only one—the Lord Justice of Natal—would be on the British side. He also objected to accept the Lord Chief Justice of England as he was one of our friends. He said, however, he had no objection to arbitration if he appointed his own two arbitrators and you appointed yours, but he could not accept the Chief Justices, as to do so was equivalent to two persons having a dispute, and one of them proposing that the matter should be settled by arbitration and naming his own friends as arbitrators. From my conversation with him, I think Mr. Chamberlain rather regrets the course he has taken and he seemed to climb down with regard to the claim of Suzerainty based upon the 1881 Convention. I do not think he will again have the audacity to raise that preposterous claim.

We have had a number of meetings since I wrote to you, held in various parts of the country to explain matters to our people, and urging a peaceful arrangement, and, I think, on the whole, there has been a decided growth in that direction. Still the war-party here is very powerful. Their newspapers are full of lies and misrepresentations about you and your people and all those of us who take your side and this is having some little effect upon the thoughtless in this country.

We called a Demonstration in favour of peace last Sunday in Trafalgar Square. The war-journals incited their readers to come there for the purpose of disturbing it and preventing us from passing our resolution in favour of peace. There was a great surging crowd of 30,000 to 40,000 people, and they drowned our voices by their shouts and noise and entirely spoilt our meeting. London has always been in favour of a war-like policy. The Jingo element is very strong in London—stronger than it is in the other provincial towns.

The Cabinet is meeting to-day and you will soon know the character of the ultimatum

they are going to send you. From what I hear privately the conditions are such as to be tantamount to a declaration of war, and I have no doubt that when the despatch is published in your country your people will see that war is inevitable.

I do not desire to advise you or them as to the course which you should pursue. It might strengthen you in this struggle that seems inevitable if you were to seize all the passes in order to defend yourselves against attack, but if you were to do this I am afraid it would have a bad effect morally in this country, and will give rise to accusations that you have been all along intending to commence hostilities in order to have an anti-British South African Republic from the Cape to the Zambesi. However, it is not much matter what you do or do not do; you will be maligned and misrepresented in any case. Still I think it desirable to say that, while it might strengthen you in your own country, it would, to a certain extent, weaken you before Europe.

But I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of offering advice. I have wired to Dr. Leyds to-day to come over here and see me with a view of arranging matters if war should now begin. Mr. Montagu White and the Baron de Quarles will go across to Brussels. I shall keep them acquainted as far as possible with trend of feeling here, and they will be able to send on any information they may think desirable to you. If you want to communicate with me at any time, you will be able to do so through them.

You see from my letter that I am now hopeless of a peaceful solution. I do not know what the effect in this country will be of the ultimatum that will be sent to you by the Cabinet to-day. I do not see that they have any justification for the course they are taking, and I cannot think that the mind and conscience of our people can be satisfied with the various pretexts that have been raised for interference with you. Even if war begins, we will all do our best to protest against a course which we believe to be wanton and wicked.

I shall see the various members of the Government, and if there is any chance of a settlement at any time I will communicate with you. I am sending you a pamphlet which we are circulating on a very large scale. Mr. Stead, who writes it, has been until lately one of our enemies. He has now come round to our side, and is a very valuable ally. He is only one of many here who are convinced that justice is being denied to you and your people, and who will continue to work for what they believe to be the cause of truth.

I am, &c.,
G. B. CLARK.

President Kruger,
Pretoria, South Africa.

Enclosure 2 in No. 15.

Dr. G. B. CLARK, M.P., to General JOUBERT.

TRANSVAAL COMMITTEE.

St. Ermin's Mansions, Westminster,
London, S.W., September 29, 1899.

MY DEAR JOUBERT,

WE have been holding a number of meetings all over the country since I wrote last to you. I believe that there is a decided growth of the feeling in favour of peace, but on the other hand the war party are very active and very noisy. Their disgraceful newspapers are full of lies and misrepresentations about your country and about those of us who are taking your side and who are working for a peaceful solution.

Our Demonstration in Trafalgar Square last Sunday was broken up by a crowd who had been incited to come there for that purpose. The Jingo element is very strong in London and unfortunately London has always been in favour of a warlike policy.

The Cabinet is meeting to-day, and I very much fear that the ultimatum which is being sent to you is tantamount to a declaration of war, and I fear that your people will consider it as such.

I cannot see that the Government has any justification for the course which it is taking. I am feeling hopeless that anything but war can follow from it, but I believe that the mind and conscience of our people do not approve of a course which I consider to be both wanton and wicked.

I shall continue to work for what I believe to be the cause of Justice, and even if war begins, our Committee will protest against such a policy.

I am sending you a copy of a pamphlet which we are circulating on a very large scale. Mr. Stead, who has written it, was until lately a violent partisan of the Rhodes policy, but he has completely come round to our side.

I shall watch the course of events with the very deepest interest, and you may rely upon me to do anything that is possible to forward a speedy settlement.

Believe me, &c.,
G. B. CLARK.

General Joubert,
Pretoria, South Africa.

No. 16.

DR. G. B. CLARK, M.P., TO MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

SIR, Ardnahane, Cove, Dumbartonshire, August 9, 1900.

I HAVE your letter with enclosures, containing copies of the last letters I sent to President Kruger and General Joubert.

I have no explanation or remarks to offer regarding them.

I am, &c.,
G. B. CLARK.

No. 17.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN TO MR. H. LABOUCHERE, M.P.

SIR, Downing Street, August 6, 1900.

G to call your attention to the enclosed copy of a letter from Mr. Montagu White with copies of two letters purporting to have been written by you, and to enquire if you desire to offer any explanations or observations with regard to them.

I am, &c.,
J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 17.

MR. MONTAGU WHITE to MR. REITZ.

DEAR DR. REITZ, 58, Victoria Street, London, August 4, 1899.

I FEEL tired and done for to-night. It is past six o'clock and still have 40 miles to go before I get home. My inclination is to wire to you asking you to tell the British Government to go to the devil and do their "darnedest." It is perfectly sickening the way one is kept in a continual state of suspense and nervous excitement. Everything is as quiet as possible on the surface, and there has been a tremendous decrease in Press Cuttings which is a sure sign that matters are relapsing into a normal condition. But I have been able to judge of the effect upon our friends of hints that we may not be able to accept the proposed Commission. Without exception they one and all are dead against our refusing it, and all agree that we shall have to face a very serious crisis, if we refuse the proposal, and that without the friendly support of the majority of the newspapers which have hitherto been on our side. Spender of the "Chronicle" who has fought consistently and well for us, tells me none of them can understand in what way we shall be worse off by accepting the commission, for (if) your people disagree about the finding of the report, what can Mr. Chamberlain do further? Even our best friends say that by rejecting the report of the Industrial Commission two years ago, we have allowed things to go so far that it is unwise to talk of intermeddling in our home affairs as a refusal to entertain what public opinion here endorses as a fair proposal. The essence of friendly advice is: accept the proposal in principle, point out how difficult it will be to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to statistics, &c., and how undesirable it would be to have

a miscarriage of the Commission. In other words: Gain as much time as you can and give the public time here to get out of the dangerous frame of mind which Chamberlain's speeches have created. Spender is of opinion that after two months' delay all danger will have vanished. I can't say I share his optimistic views, for this sort of thing has been going on for three years.

Labouchere said to me this morning: "Don't for goodness sake let Mr. Kruger make his first mistake by refusing this; a little skilful management and he will give Master Joe another fall." He further said: "You are such past masters in the art of gaining time, here is an opportunity, you surely have not let your right hands lose their cunning, and you ought to spin out the negociations for quite two or three months." I must leave off now. Please remember one thing: I don't send you *my* advice. I send you the opinions of friends and the tendency of public feeling here.

Some one sent me some lines parodying R. Kipling's "Lest we forget." I got it published in "Truth."

Yours very truly,
MONTAGU WHITE.

Enclosure 2 in No. 17.

MR. H. LABOUCHERE, M.P., to MR. MONTAGU WHITE.

5, Old Palace Yard, S.W.,
August 2, 1899.

DEAR MR. MONTAGU WHITE,

YOU will see the lines in "Truth." I have altered one or two words to make the grammar all right.

I do hope that President Kruger will manage to accept in some form the reference (proposed conference). Bannerman and all our front bench believe that it is only a way devised by the Cabinet to let Joe climb down. The new Franchise Act stands. The *onus probandi* of showing that it does not give substantial representation to the Uitlanders, and yet leave the Boers masters, is with Chamberlain.

The difference between five and seven years is not a ground for proof. The details for registration do not prove it. Let President Kruger quote our Registration Laws, which you had better send him, and do not forget that a lodger has to register every year, he is not automatically on the Franchise list. In connection with this, Milner suggested in his despatch six years. He afterwards said that six was a mistake for five. But Chamberlain in his reply to the despatch approved of six. It is impossible to calculate the effect without knowing how many Uitlanders there are, and how long each has been in the country.

To discover this basis of enquiry would take a long time. As the decision would go by the majority, the question would be on the chairman, who would have a casting vote. Surely it could be arranged with Natal; the Cape and the Orange Free State, as well as the Transvaal should be represented, with the Chairman an English man who has not yet expressed an opinion.

My own impression is that comparatively few will ever become Boers amongst the English; they will not like to give up their nationality. The President has a great opportunity to give Joe another fall. If at the same time the Dynamite Concession is abrogated, there will be a rise in many shares, and this will be regarded as a barometer, that everything is going on well and satisfactorily.

The great thing is to gain time. In a few months we shall be howling about something in another part of the world.

Yours truly,
H. LABOUCHERE.

Enclosure 3 in No. 17.

MR. H. LABOUCHERE, M.P., to MR. MONTAGU WHITE.

5, Old Palace Yard, S.W., Friday, August 4, 1899.

DEAR MR. WHITE,

IT is the general opinion that Chamberlain "climbed down." As Bannerman put it to me: "His speech was a little bluster of his own with the main parts arranged

by his colleagues, and they sat by like policemen to see that he read them." As a matter of fact he did read all the important parts.

If the President agrees to the Committee, it will, under clever tactics, take months to settle conditions, and then it will take further months to come to a decision. If the basis is established that there shall be a substantial representation of the Uitlanders, yet not such as can endanger the majority of the Boers, no harm can well come of the Commission. The only difficulty is that it is a sort of recognition of our right to meddle. But this might be avoided in two ways: (1) By getting Schreiner into it and making it a sort of South African affair; (2) By making a bargain and agreeing only on the understanding that there should be arbitration on all matters affecting the true reading of the convention. But if the latter is proposed, then the President should put in some proposal for the Chief Justices and one Imperial Judge or Governor to be the tribunal.

The universal opinion is that the Cabinet has forced all this on Chamberlain, and that they are determined not to have war and to do something to let him down easily.

Salisbury's speech was conceived on these lines, and a little vague bluster, but nothing more.

I accentuated Bannerman's declaration about hostilities; this pledges the Liberal party against war.

Yours truly,
H. LABOUCHERE.

No. 18.

MR. H. VOULES to MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

"Truth" Buildings, Carteret Street,
SIR, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W., August 13, 1900.

I DO not know when your letter of the 6th August, addressed to Mr. Labouchere at his private residence, was delivered, but his servants only sent it on to this office on Saturday morning last, and through absence from town I only received it to-day, Monday.

Mr. Labouchere left England on Saturday, August 4th, but I will at once forward your communication with its enclosures to him.

Faithfully yours,
HORACE VOULES.

No. 19.

MR. H. LABOUCHERE, M.P., to MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

Hotel and Pension Waldhaus,
SIR, Vulpera-Tarasp, Engadine Schweiz, August 18, 1900.

I BEG to acknowledge your letter of August 6, enclosing copy of a letter of Mr. Montagu White, with copies of two letters "purporting" to have been written by me, and enquiring if I desire to offer any explanation or observations with regard to them.

For what I may have written or said to Mr. Montagu White, I am responsible to the House of Commons of which I am a Member, to my constituents who have done me the honour to send me there, and to the law—to you I owe no sort of explanation. I ascribe, therefore, your invitation to furnish you with one in respect of the enclosed letters to the singular illusion that, no matter what course you may see fit to adopt, whether as a Conservative or a Liberal Minister, all owe you a personal explanation who take the liberty to disapprove of it, and to do their best to prevent its bringing us into unnecessary hostilities with some foreign Power. Whilst not recognizing this pretension on your part, I will, however, offer some observations in regard to these letters, as you apparently desire that I should do so.

The letters of mine enclosed in copy were I do not doubt written by me. The only exception that I have to take to the copies is that a few of the words in them are, I should fancy, erroneously copied, as they do not make sense. The advice tendered in them seems to me to be excellent, and I know of no reason why I should not have addressed it to Mr. White, who was then the representative of a country with which we were at peace. Many letters passed before the war between that gentleman and myself. He was most desirous that all possibility of war should be removed, and that harmony and good feeling should be established on a firm basis between Great Britain and the Transvaal. This we both thought could only be effected by a full recognition of the Convention of 1884, as explained by Lord Derby who signed it for Great Britain, and by reasonable concessions on the part of the Transvaal Government in regard to the naturalization and electoral franchise of the Uitlanders domiciled in the Republic. I therefore suggested that the Transvaal Government should grant to such domiciled aliens naturalization and franchise on precisely the same terms as they are granted to aliens in Great Britain. A law thus framed would, I thought, not be open to objection on your part, and would put an end to all the carping criticisms that were being raised by you in respect to small and unimportant details in the concessions that you were pressing on the Transvaal in regard to these matters, and which seemed to me hardly calculated to bring about a peaceful solution of the situation. If I remember rightly, the last letters exchanged between Mr. White and myself were just before the close of the normal session of Parliament last year. Mr. White in his letter informed me that he had received a communication from Mr. Reitz, the Transvaal Secretary of State, in which that gentleman told him that, although he had always been a strong advocate for all reasonable reforms in respect to the Uitlanders, and although he had used all his influence to promote a peaceful solution of the pending issues between the two countries, your despatches were so persistently insulting in their tone, and all concessions made by his Government were so invariably met by you with fresh demands, that even the most moderate of the Transvaal Burghers were becoming convinced that you were determined to oblige them either to surrender at discretion to all that you might demand, or to defend by arms the position secured to the Transvaal by the Convention of 1884. He, therefore, suggested that the negotiations should be taken in hand by Lord Salisbury, in which case he was convinced that a settlement satisfactory to both sides would be easily come to. As I entirely agreed with this opinion of Mr. Reitz, and believed that you were the chief impediment to such a settlement, I replied to Mr. White, that the tenor of Mr. Reitz's communication should be conveyed to a leading member of the Cabinet, and that I hoped—although I did not expect—that the suggestion would bear fruit.

As I gathered from your observations in the House of Commons, that you had not made up your mind whether you would publish the letters of Members of Parliament to Transvaal Authorities that had fallen into your hands, I will—so far as my letters are concerned—relieve you of the trouble of any further consideration by at once publishing them myself, together with this correspondence. I have often urged that the public should have the advantage of a full knowledge of all documents which are likely to enable them to form a sound judgment in respect to the issues that have arisen in South Africa. Might I, with all respect, venture to suggest to you that you should follow my example. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (whoever he may be) and H.M. Representatives in foreign capitals correspond, not only by despatches, but by what they are pleased to call "private letters," which are, to all intents and purposes, despatches. I presume that the same course is usual between Secretaries of State for the Colonies and H.M. Colonial Governors. You have announced that you are in favour of a "new diplomacy," in which nothing is kept back from the public. Would it be too much to ask you to inaugurate this "new diplomacy" by publishing all the so-called private letters treating of public matters that have been exchanged between you and the Governors of Natal and the Cape Colony; and all the letters and despatches exchanged between these Governors and our Military Commanders in South Africa, of which you may have copies. Without these documents it is impossible that either the House of Commons or the electors of the United Kingdom can form a true conclusion in regard to the "diplomacy" that led to the war, or be able to affix the responsibility on the right shoulders in respect to our lack of preparation for hostilities in South Africa, and our initial reverses. If it is too much to hope that you will act on this suggestion, I would venture to urge that at least you should publish the correspondence between yourself and Mr. Hawkesley in regard to your alleged knowledge of the contemplated Rhodes-Jameson conspiracy

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Shri Brihad Bhartiya Samaj

on 31 October, 2019

of 1894. Mr. Hawkesley is still, and then was, the Solicitor of the Chartered Company of South Africa, and is a close friend and confidant of Mr. Rhodes. When the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into all connected with the conspiracy was sitting, Mr. Hawkesley was a witness. He alluded to this correspondence. But when I wished to examine him about it, which was my right as a member of the Committee according to Parliamentary usage, this was not permitted by the Committee. After the Report of the Committee was published, Mr. Hawkesley made public his conviction that, if this correspondence saw the light, a guilty knowledge of the contemplated conspiracy would be brought home to you. When the debate on the Report took place in the House of Commons, he placed the correspondence in the hands of a Member with instructions to read it, if you made any attack upon Mr. Rhodes. Far, however, from doing this, you went out of your way to assert that Mr. Rhodes had done nothing to invalidate his right to be considered an honourable man, although only a few days before you had agreed to a Report in which he was branded as having been guilty of dishonourable conduct. Since then, again and again, you have been asked to produce the correspondence. But this you have persistently refused to do, although no public interest could suffer by the production. Yet, if Mr. Hawkesley is wrong in the inference that he deduces from the correspondence, it is obvious that its publication would go far to allay the suspicion, which led President Kruger to doubt your desire for a peaceful solution of the strained relations that existed between Her Majesty's Government and that of the Transvaal Republic, and which even now militates against all good feeling between the Colonists in South Africa of British and Dutch origin.

I trust that you will excuse my venturing to make these suggestions. I do so, because I heartily agree with you as to the desirability of the "new diplomacy." It is the only way in which that popular control can be established over the Executive, which is essential in a self-governing community, if it is to escape from falling under the domination of some pushing, unscrupulous adventurer, gifted with a ready tongue.

I believed, with my leader, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, that the war might and ought to have been avoided, and I cannot help hoping that my letters which have fallen into your hands will show you that I laboured to the best of my ability in order that it should be avoided. Unfortunately these efforts were not successful; the war was commenced under a lamentable ignorance on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers of the resistance which the two Dutch Republics would oppose to our arms. Reverses followed owing to the meddling of civilians in military matters. Pretoria, Johannesburg, and Bloemfontein are in our hands. The Orange Free State has been annexed. The Transvaal Republic is to be annexed. Under these circumstances peace and prosperity can only be restored to South Africa, when all suspicion is removed that the Secretary of State for the Colonies was actuated by his previous relations with the Rhodes-Jameson conspiracy in forcing on a war. I am sure, too, that you will agree with me that it will not be right for the electors of the United Kingdom to be called upon to pronounce an opinion on the policy of a war which has cost us thousands of valuable lives, and tens of millions of money, as well as on the mode in which the war has been conducted, until all that can enable them to arrive at a conclusion has seen the light.

I am, &c.,

H. LABOUCHERE.

P.S. If you desire to offer any explanation or observations with regard to your action in respect to South Africa, they will receive due consideration.